Social Networking Safety

Tweens, teens and adults have flocked to so-called social networking sites including MySpace, Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn, just to name a few. So much so, that kids who don't have a profile are becoming the exception to the rule. Uncle Joe has his resume posted online in hopes of landing a better job and Grandma is on Facebook so she can keep track of everyone's activities. However, there may be others out there watching your activities with more sinister intentions. In addition to "Stranger Danger," there are a host of other potentially harmful consequences when children and adults ignore online safety.

Most social networking sites have privacy settings that allow you to restrict who has access to your profile and website information. Choose one that allows you to filter out anyone you do not specifically give permission to. Do not allow anyone you don't know have access to your information.

Kids and young adults on the Internet often fail to recognize the danger, taking everyone at face value. Explain to them that on the "Anonymous Web" there ARE predators pretending to be friends. If you do not personally know who you are talking to, do not assume they are telling the truth.

Tell them not to give out *any* personal information that may allow someone to find them, such as date of birth, their school, sports teams they belong to, address or phone numbers.

From The Desk Of Commander Bill Wilton

I hope everyone enjoyed the holidays and I trust your new year is off to a safe and prosperous start.
I would like to remind you the city is entering into the special event season. With the golf tournament, car shows, horse shows and spring training baseball games upon us, we will all need to be extra vigilant when we attend these events.

When you park your vehicle always remember to park in well lit areas if possible, remove your keys from your vehicle, lock the doors and roll up your windows, use an anti theft device including a steering wheel lock or an alarm system, remove valuables from your vehicles (purses, wallets, golf clubs, laptops, GPS devices etc.) if you cannot remove the valuables right away place them in your trunk prior to your final destination. Consider having your vehicle vin-etched by our Auto-Theft Unit. Vin-etching is the process where your vehicles vehicle identification number is acid etched onto each window. This provides a personal identification for each piece of glass stating it belongs to your vehicle. You can also participate in the Watch Your Car Program. For more information on this free program please visit www.azwatchyourccar.com

Thank you for your continued support,

Commander Bill Wilton
(480) 312-8803
wwilton@scottsdaleaz.gov

Photos should also be closely guarded, as they can be easily manipulated. Remember, child pornography is illegal, even if it is sent by the child. Minors should never comply with a request to send provocative photos of themselves and **NEVER** go to meet someone they met online unless they take a parent or guardian. Predators like easy prey, talk to your children about what to do if they are approached.

Be aware that anything you post NEVER completely goes away. Even if you remove it, there may be saved versions of it out in Cyber-land that can come back to haunt you at any time. Is it something you wouldn't want your grandmother, your college recruiter, your boss or future boss to see? Then do not post it on the Internet.

Parents are responsible for what their child is doing online. Does your child let you view their profile? Does it look harmless enough and "clean?" Are the privacy settings correct? How many other profiles might they have that they don't tell you about and wouldn't want you to see? The old saying, "It's 10 o'clock, do you know where your children are?" takes on a whole new meaning on the Internet. There are many software programs that allow parents to record and review every keystroke on a computer.

In addition to the personal hazards, computers themselves can become victims to unscrupulous predators on the Web. A "friend" sends you a cute video to watch. When you click on the link it says you must download a new version of the "player" to see it. With that download you also get malware that infects your computer. The original email was not from your friend after all, it was a virus that had infected their computer and gained access to their contact lists.

Malware is short for Malicious Software and it is designed to infiltrate or damage a computer system without the owner's informed consent.

A strictly for-profit category of malware has emerged in spyware. Programs are designed to monitor users' web browsing, display unsolicited advertisements, or redirect affiliate marketing revenues to the spyware creator. Spyware programs do not spread like viruses; they are, in general, installed by exploiting security holes or are packaged with user-installed software, such as peer-to-peer applications (those "cute little" apps through social networking sites).

Anti-malware software programs can be used for detection and removal of malware software that has already been installed onto a computer. This is different from, and should be used in addition to, a reliable anti-virus program. Don't allow yourself to become a victim through information theft on your computer.

In the end, each person must decide how much information they are comfortable with having out there in the world. With a lot of caution, the right tools and some common sense, interacting with others on social networking sites can be safe *and* fun for everyone.

For more information on crime prevention or additional opportunities to get involved in YOUR community contact Crime Prevention Officer Jason Glenn at 480-312-8802, email: jglenn@scottsdaleaz.gov , or District 4 Police Aide Shannon Ziemba at 480-312-8801, email: sziemba@scottsdaleaz.gov

Upcoming Events

Scottsdale Police Department Shredding Event

When: Saturday February 13th

Where: Scottsdale Artists School
          3720 N. Marshall Way

Time: 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
          $2.00 per box donation

USA On Watch Arizona Shredding Event

When: Saturday February 6th

Where: Sam's Club 15255 N. Northsight Blvd.

Time: 9:00a.m. to 11:00 a.m.

Donations of coins accepted 2 box limit. For more information contact Vickie Owen at vowen@acpa.net

Public Safety Community Contact Numbers and E-mail Links

- **Scottsdale Police Non-Emergency** 480-312-5000
- **Scottsdale Fire Department** 480-312-8000
- **SPD Drug Enforcement Hotline** - Suspected illegal activity, 480-312-TIPS (Hot lines are not monitored)
- **SPD Traffic Enforcement Hotline** - chronic traffic problems, 480-312-CARS
- **Code Enforcement** 480-312-2546
- **Child Safety Seat Installation** 480-312-BABY
- **CPR/First Aid Classes** 480-312-1817